

In Front of Saudi Consulate, Reps. Nadler and Weiner Announce Legislation to Stop Arms Sale to Saudi Arabia

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New York City ‐ Standing in front of the Saudi Consulate, Reps. Jerrold Nadler (D-Brooklyn & Manhattan) and Anthony Weiner (D-Brooklyn & Queens) announced a Congressional effort to stop the Bush administration from sending a \$20 billion arms package of advanced weaponry including satellite-guided bombs to the Saudi Arabian government this Fall. The Congressmen said they will introduce legislation to block the deal “the minute Congress is officially notified.”

Late Friday, Bush administration officials announced they are preparing to ask Congress to approve an arms sale package of \$20 billion to the Saudi Arabian government. The package includes Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAM’s), satellite guided bombs accurate enough to shoot through the window of a building from jets in any weather. The United States has never sold such advanced munitions to Saudi Arabia before. The sale would also upgrade the capability of the Saudi Air Force and provide new naval vessels.

Congress may reject any large arms sale according to the Arms Control Export Act of 1976. The President is required to officially notify Congress of an impending arms deal, who then has 30 days to trigger a review and pass a Joint Resolution of Disapproval.

The Joint Resolution of Disapproval has been used in the past by Congress to affect weapons sales, including in 1986 when Congress successfully convinced then President Reagan to cut back an arms sale to Saudi Arabia. Past administrations have renegotiated sales based on just the prospect of a Congressional Review.

Saudi Arabia has not been a true ally in furthering the United States interests in the Middle East. Just this week, Brig. General Kevin Bergner, the top American military spokesman in Iraq detailed an account of a Saudi Arabian smuggled into Iraq to be a suicide bomber. American officials in Iraq say the majority of suicide bombers in Iraq are from Saudi Arabia and that about 40 percent of all foreign fighters are Saudi. 70% of the most-wanted international terrorists are Saudi Arabians.

In February the Saudi Arabian government torpedoed U.S. plans to conduct a high-profile peace summit meeting between Israel and the Palestinian Authority by brokering their own power-sharing agreement, catching the U.S. off guard and ensuring the agreement would not require Hamas to recognize Israel or forswear violence.

And despite assurances to the contrary, Saudi Arabia continues to bankroll terrorist organizations that have attacked both the United States and Israel. In sworn testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee in November 2005, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Daniel L. Glaser indicated that the Saudi Arabian government refuses to crack down on the World Association of Muslim Youth (WAMY), which spreads radical Wahhabism and finances Hamas and Al Qaeda.

“We need to send a crystal clear message to the Saudi Arabian government that their tacit approval of terrorism can’t go unpunished,” said Rep. Weiner. “Saudi Arabia should not get an ounce of military support from the U.S until they unequivocally denounce terrorism and take tangible steps to prevent it."

"The Bush Administration must learn that Saudi Arabia is not our friend," said Rep. Nadler. " We must not supply arms to Saudi Arabia while they are financing the teaching of Wahhabi terrorism all over the world. It is not accident that 15 of the 19 terrorists on 9/11 were Saudi. Arms supplies to the Saudis may very well be turned against Israel and could easily end

up in the hands of terrorists. And, we should remember that the high tech arms we gave to the Shah of Iran ended up in the Ayatollah Khomeini's hands. The same thing could end up happening in Saudi Arabia."

Reps. Shelley Berkley (D-NV), Joseph Crowley (D-NY), Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), Jerry Nadler (D-NY), Linda Sanchez (D-CA) and Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) have joined Weiner and Rep. Robert Wexler (D-FL) in support of a Joint Resolution of Disapproval, writing "we have grave reservations that this arms sale to Saudi Arabia could allow weapons to slip into terrorist hands."

For each of the last three years, Rep. Weiner has passed amendments in the House of Representatives banning U.S aid to Saudi Arabia.

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